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THE FIERY CROSS

BY

JOHN OXENHAM

AUTHOR OF "THE VISION SPLENDID," "ALL'S WELL,"
"BEES IN AMBER," ETC.



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TO
ALL
WHO FEEL THE VITAL NEED
FOR
A RETURN TO GOD
AND
A HIGHER SPIRITUAL LIFE
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS DEDICATED
IN PRAYERFUL HOPE

FOREWORD

FOREWORD

Things spiritual—the Master Things—the only things which in the end really count, have of late years been sadly outpaced by things material. The servants have outrun their Master. We are paying for it in suffering such as the world has never known.

Life, the world over, forging swiftly ahead in all material matters, has been losing sight of those higher claims of the All-Giver, without due recognition of which all other gain is as dust of the balances.

To use a trite but expressive phrase,—“First things first” has not of late years been the rule of life—but instead, second things, third things, tenth things—ay, and still worse things which had no right whatever even to exist.

More has been done to improve Life's bodily conditions than ever before, though still there was much that was left undone. But tending the body and neglecting the soul is but decking a dying man with flowers,—pandering to the servant, neglecting the Master.

A complete re-adjustment of values and of vi-

FOREWORD

sion is needed—and is needed NOW—AT ONCE. How is it to come? Who will bring it about?

In olden times, when danger threatened, the Scottish clansmen sped the call to arms over hill and moor by the Fiery Cross,—two charred sticks dipped in blood. And every man answered that call instantly and to the full, for his life and all he held dear were at stake.

We have seen Life ravished by fire and drenched with blood. Do we need a still fierier cross than this fierce red flame of War?

If the world answers The Call, it shall be well with it. If it does not . . . Then God have mercy upon us, for we shall deserve to the full all that will most assuredly befall us.

God never lacks men when His time is full-ripe. If this little book quickens one soul to readiness for The Call when it comes it will not have failed of its object. May it serve His purpose!

JOHN OXENHAM

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A Little Prayer

*Where'er thou be,
On land or sea,
Or in the air,
This little prayer
I pray for thee,—
God keep thee ever,
Day and night,—
Face to the light,—
Thine armour bright,—
Thy 'scutcheon white,—
That no despight
Thine honour smite!—
With infinite
Sweet oversight,
God keep thee ever,
Heart's delight!—
And guard thee whole,
Sweet body, soul,
And spirit high;
That, live or die,
Thou glorify
His Majesty;
And ever be,
Within His sight,
His true and upright,
Sweet and stainless,
Pure and sinless,
Perfect Knight!*

THE FIERY CROSS

The wayward world has nailed itself
On its own cross of woe;
With its own hands it hewed the wood,
It dyed the rood with its own blood,
And then, with vicious blow,
Drove home the nails that it had cast,
Through its own flesh, and made them
fast;
It dug the pit below.

But every cross new meaning holds,
Since such sweet virtue came
Of Calvary; and though mankind
Still wanders graceless, deaf and blind
To his own bitter shame,
Yet, by God's grace, he shall arise
From this dread cross of sacrifice
To set all Life aflame.

For—

The Fiery Cross is speeding forth
To the purging of men's lives.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE FIERY CROSS (continued)

Christ bears it through the troubled earth,
To quicken Life to nobler birth,
To break the ancient gyves;
His love flames in the Fiery Cross,
Sorting the pure gold from the dross,
And from their sin men shrives.

Speed on, speed on, the Fiery Cross
For the kindling of men's souls!
The Powers of Ill have had their day,
They broke Life on the rough red way,
They levied bitter tolls.
But now God's torch is blazing bright,
Wrong lies beneath the heel of Right,
And men seek nobler goals.

THE FIERY CROSS

TO WHOM SHALL THE WORLD HENCE-
FORTH BELONG?

*To whom shall the world henceforth belong,
And who shall go up and possess it?*

To the Great-Hearts—the Strong
Who will suffer no wrong,
And where they find evil redress it.

—To the Men of Bold Sight,
Whose souls, seised of Light,
Found a work to be done and have done it.

—To the Valiant who fought
For a soul-lifting thought,
Saw the fight to be won and have won it.

—To the Men of Great Mind
Set on lifting their kind,
Who, regardless of danger, will do it.

—To the Men of Goodwill,
Who would cure all Life's ill,
And whose passion for peace will ensue it.

THE FIERY CROSS

TO WHOM SHALL THE WORLD HENCE-
FORTH BELONG? (continued)

—To the Men who will bear
Their full share of Life's care,
And will rest not till wrongs be all righted.

—To the Stalwarts who toil
'Mid the seas of turmoil,
Till the Haven of Safety be sighted.

—To the Men of Good Fame
Who everything claim—
This world and the next—in their Mas-
ter's great name;—

—To these shall the world henceforth be-
long,
And they shall go up and possess it;
Overmuch, overlong, has the world suf-
fered wrong,
We are here by God's help to redress it.

THE PRAYER IMMORTAL

*"Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done."*

Never since Time began
Has mortal man
Had sorer need to pray that prayer immortal.
For ne'er before has Death's grim door
Its gaping portal flung so wide,
Nor man so gallantly defied
His menace, and so vastly died;
Never has life so racked and tortured been,
Nor earth such deadly exigencies seen.
And that full prayer of prayers
In its divine simplicities
Fills all the heights and depths
Of our necessities.
Granted in full it would bring Earth
To Heaven, and unto Life—new birth.

So—to your knees—
And, with your heart and soul, pray God
That wars may cease,

THE FIERY CROSS

THE PRAYER IMMORTAL (continued)

And earth, by His good will,
Through these rough ways, find peace!—

*“Thy Kingdom come!
And, as in heaven,
On earth Thy Will be done!”*

GREAT AND GREATER

Within the great a greater still I see,—
Within this grim world-strife
The struggle of a menaced Life
With godless tyranny,—
The travail of a new-born Life
For its epiphany.

So, in this strife I see the greater strife,—
Man's soul at grips with Ill,
And presage of a nobler life
Close-wedded to Thy Will;—
The coming of a sweeter life
Which nought on earth shall kill.

Within this great there still a greater is,
And he sets all things free,—
Death, the Emancipator is,
And, through this death-strife, we
Shall win the life that greater is,
And Life's security.

*Not on the flaming fields across the seas
Alone, this fight for God's supremacies*

THE FIERY CROSS

GREAT AND GREATER (continued)

*But in the hearts of men throughout the
world*

*His banner is at last unfurled,
And from their thrones the Powers of Ill,
By the whole world's united will,
Are being hurled.*

THE FIERY CROSS

A LITTLE TE DEUM FOR THOSE WHO HAVE LOST

For manly courage under grievous loss;
For faith of woman bowed beneath her
 cross;
For Hope that bravely glowed 'neath
 stormy skies;
For Love that suffered untold agonies
With saintly fortitude, and, tempest-tost
And sore bestead, yet never lost
Her hold on God, and His high promises;
For noble deeds as simple duty done,
In their Christlikeness known to God alone;
For high heroic bearing under stress;
For hearts that no ill-fortune could depress;
For every helpful word and kindly deed
That found occasion in its brother's need;
For that Brute Force is from its saddle
 hurled,
And that the sword no more can rule the
 world;
For growth of wisdom in this mire of war,

THE FIERY CROSS

A LITTLE TE DEUM FOR THOSE WHO
HAVE LOST (continued)

Which leaves Thee more than ever Con-
queror;

For that the world has found its soul again,
And set its heel upon this curse of Cain;

For that Thy Justice is again restored,
And War as arbiter henceforth abhorred;—

For that the dear lives were not given in
vain,—

Despite the anguish of our loss and pain,

We thank Thee, Lord!

We thank Thee, Lord!

FIDEI DEFENSOR

Gone!—in the unutterable splendour
Of your immortal youth!—
Gone—unto Him who made, and making, gave
 you
Passion for Truth;—
Made you heart-bold to brave the wroth
Of this world's evil;—
Made you soul-strong to face the Devil,
And to suffer ruth,—
Yea—and in very sooth, that final ruth
Which yet shall give you back
Your here-lost youth.

Gone!—unto Him who, making, made of you,
In all the glowing splendour of your youth,
One more high-souled defender of His Truth.
To your dear memory we render
Deepest soul-homage;
And unto Him—unceasing praise!
To Him—of all men's souls
The Great All-Wise Dispenser,—
Unceasing praise, for you,—
Our Fidei Defensor!

THE ONE WAY OUT—AND UP

One thing, and one thing only shall avail
To lift the earth from out this sore travail
By folly wrought, and selfishness, and sin;—
One thing alone—and that within
Our compassing if but we will.
It rests with *us*, and good, or ill,
Shall be our lot as we ourselves destine.

“CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL
SERVE !”

God—or those other gods of your own choos-
ing,

Whom erst ye served to your souls’ bitter los-
ing.

MAMMON OR GOD? . . . ye cannot serve them
both.

That way ye tried, forsaking your God-troth;
And now . . . ye bear the ruth.

God waits,—has waited long—still waits;
Each dawn His promise He reiterates,
And down the long dim corridors of Time
His word reverberates,—

THE FIERY CROSS

THE ONE WAY OUT—AND UP (continued)

“CHOOSE YE THIS DAY!”

From our own wilful way

He calls us back,

And promises again this day

That no soul based on Him shall suffer lack.

Here the Ways part,—

That climbing road

Leads up to God,

This easier way

Leads down to death,

And ruin, and decay.

“CHOOSE YE THIS DAY!”—

And choose ye carefully,

For as ye now shall say

So shall it with you be

In that Great Day.

IN EVERY MAN

In every soul of all mankind
Somewhat of Christ I find,
 Somewhat of Christ—and thee;
For in each one there surely dwells
That something which most surely spells
 Life's immortality.

Beclouded oft, and oft obscure,
In peril oft of forfeiture,
And lost in many a plicature,
 Yet in each one there is
Such hope of soul-recoveries,
Such grace of soul-discoveries,
That in each life the seed there lies
 Of high immortal destinies.

And so, for love of Christ—and thee,
I will not cease to seek and find,
 In all mankind,
That hope of immortality
Which dwells so sacramentally
 In Christ—and thee.

TWO ANGELS

Two angels walk the earth to-day,
Each bearing in his hand
The symbol of his ministry,
And does his Lord's command.

One bears a mighty two-edged sword,
And wounds Life to the death;
The other bears Christ's holy chrism,
And the wounded comforteth.

So, side by side, they walk the earth
For the purging of men's souls;
One gives, through Death, Life's nobler
birth,
The other Life consoles.

CEILED HOUSES

A MESSAGE FOR THESE TIMES

(Two thousand five hundred years ago Haggai delivered this message. It has been on the way ever since, and is as much needed to-day as it was then. Conditions alter. Facts and results unfortunately remain the same. The world must bear its load until it learns its lesson.)

"What are these ceiled houses?"

Asked the Prophet coldly,—

His eyes like smouldering fires,

And the people answered boldly,—

"These be our houses, Man of God,

The houses where we dwell."

"And these half-built walls?"

And they answered, timorous-boldly,—

"That is the Lord's house, waiting safer times

To finish building. . . .

We have had so much to do . . .

Our flocks to tend, our crops to rear,

Our wives and little ones to guard and cherish,

THE FIERY CROSS

CEILED HOUSES (continued)

Our cities to repair,—
And all o'erburdened with the care
Of foes against us everywhere.”
Then flamed the God within him,—
“Is this a time to ~~hap~~ yourselves in comfort,
And the Lord's house still unbuilt?

THUS SAITH THE LORD,—

Consider now your ways!—

Hard you have toiled and builded—for your-
selves,

Each man of you has toiled and builded—for
himself;

Early and late you toiled and builded—for
yourselves,

And yet you have not prospered.

Much have you sown—and yet have little
reaped,

Much have you eaten—but were hungry still,

Much drunk—yet were not filled,

Much clothing worn—but yet were never warm,

And that you earned you put in bags with holes.

You looked for much, and little came of it.—

And why?—

Because of this Mine House left desolate!

Hard have you toiled—but not for ME;—

THE FIERY CROSS

CEILED HOUSES (continued)

Much have you cared—but not for ME;
And so—because you left ME out of it,
Lo, I have blown upon your work
And brought it all to nought.
Consider now your ways!”

Then did that people take God’s word to heart
And turned again to Him;
And He abode with them and prospered them.

.

AND UNTO US HE SAYS,—

Ay, you have built to Me most wondrously,
But yet your hearts you turned away from Me,
And followed other gods.
And I have prospered you most bounteously,
But yet your hearts you turned away from Me,
And followed other gods.
Wealth, Pleasure, Power, Ease,—and baser
things,—
These were your gods.
And so I blew upon your work
And brought it low.
For I, God, am a jealous God;
Yea, I am very jealous for your good.

THE FIERY CROSS

CEILED HOUSES (continued)

Ye cannot serve these other gods and Me;
Consider now your ways!
And choose this day whom ye will serve,
Your self-made gods or Me!

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

Lilac and laburnum blooming,
Full of Spring's immortal vigour,—

Big guns booming; Hell shells spuming;
Life still gripped with Death's fell rigour;—

*Man proposes,—God disposes;
Yet our hope in Him reposes
Who in war-time still makes roses.*

Bridal grace of pear and apple,
Summer snows from orchard trees,—

Sons of God in deathly grapple,
Life in direst agonies;—

*Man proposes,—God disposes;
Yet our hope in Him reposes
Who in war-time still makes roses.*

Chestnuts' sweet up-pointing spires,
On one tree a thousand churches,—

Crater-holes and hell's hot fires;
Flaming hate God's fair face smirches;—

THE FIERY CROSS

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE (continued)

*Man proposes,—God disposes;
Yet our hope in Him reposes
Who in war-time still makes roses.*

Forget-me-not and pansy sweet,
Nestling all along the border,—

• • • • •
Death's raw bones the red drums beat,
God's fair world is in disorder;—

*Man proposes,—God disposes;
Yet our hope in Him reposes
Who in war-time still makes roses.*

Dandelion,—mayflower,—daisy,
Gemming every emerald meadow,—

• • • • •
Man's devices, crude and crazy,
Brought Life to this ambuscâdo,—

*Man proposes,—God disposes;
Yet our hope in Him reposes
Who in war-time still makes roses.*

THE RED GATE

Some, by the dread Red Gate,
Have found their souls;
All, soon or late,
Have reached their goals;
All have found Life, though Fate
To some gave death,—which yet
Is but the Opened Gate
To Life Emancipate.

JUST OVER THE HILL AND UP ALONG

Just over the hill, by the climbing way,
Is a place where all good travellers stay,—
Just over the hill and up along.

At the side of the road is a garden gate,
Which is always open, early and late,—
Just over the hill and up along.

And inside the gate is a House of Rest,
Where the Host will give you his very best,—
Just over the hill and up along.

He will meet you and greet you with out-
stretched hand,
And, whatever your tongue, he will under-
stand,—
Just over the hill and up along.

You will find in the house a table spread
With a chalice of wine and Broken Bread,—
Just over the hill and up along.

THE FIERY CROSS

JUST OVER THE HILL AND UP ALONG (continued)

He will tell while you eat, and when you have
fed

He will put you to sleep in a restful bed,—
Just over the hill and up along.

You will sleep full sweet; you will dream good
dreams,

You will wake to the joy of the Morning
Beams,—

And then you will go in the strength of the
strong,

And press up and on with a glad good song,
Right over the hill—and up along.

THE LITTLE HOUSE OF BREAD

O, little Home of Peace and Perfect Calm,—
O, little, still, white, sacramental place,
Filled with the mystic effluence of His grace,
Which makes of thee a healing and a balm;—

Happed in a hollow of the great moor's breast,
Of undrest stone, with red-heart roses drest,
Haven of rest for every soul sore pressed,
Thine own sweet soul of quietness possessed:—

God surely loves thee, little House of Prayer,
Nor ever fails the soul that seeks Him there;
No matter what his sore predicament,
No matter what the burden of his pain,
No troubled soul has ever healing sought
But here he found divine medicament,—
Losing himself has won the greater gain,
And, by his giving, nobler treasure bought.

Here in the silence you confess your sin,
And holy ministrants, unheard, unseen,
Beneath the red lamp softly whisper you
New hope,—no matter what the past has been.

THE LITTLE HOUSE OF BREAD (continued)

Here some have knelt before departing hence
For the Red Fronts, and have upbuilded been
With new-born Faith's most lofty confidence,
To face the High Call of the Unforeseen:—
In weakness some, and some in penitence,
But all in highest, holiest reverence.

Here, in this altar book, are shrined the names
Of those True Knights God-pledged to purity,
Unceasing prayer their troth to honour claims,
And from high heaven their souls' security.
God surely loves thee, little House of Bread,
For here the seeking soul to Him is led,
And on His Living Bread
The hungry soul is fed.

A PRAYER FOR ENLARGEMENT

Shrive me of all my littleness and sin!
Open your great heart wide!
Open it wide and take me in,
For the sake of Christ who died!

Was I grown small and strait?—
Then shalt thou make me wide.
Through the love of Christ who died,
Thou—thou shalt make me great.

THE FIERY CROSS

EX TENEBRIS

THE LAY OF THE KNIGHT WHO ROSE AGAIN

Take away my rags!
Take away my sin!
Strip me all bare
Of that I did wear,—
The foul rags, the base rags,
The rude and the mean!
Strip me, yea, strip me
Right down to the skin!
Strip me all bare
Of that I have been!
Then wash me in water,
In fair running water,
Wash me without,
And wash me within,
In fair running water,
In fresh running water,
Wash me, ah wash me,
And make me all clean!
—Clean of the soilure
And clean of the sin,

THE FIERY CROSS

EX TENEBRIS (continued)

—Clean of the soul-crushing
Sense of defilure,
—Clean of the old self
And clean of the sin!
In fair running water,
In fresh running water,
In sun-running water,
All sweet and all pure,
Wash me, ah wash me,
And I shall be clean!

And then—ah then
Clothe me again
In the garments of Light,
In the robes of Thy ruth,—
In Purity, Truth,—
In raiment all white
And whiter than light,
—In the raiment ensanguine
That outshines the Light,
—In garments washed clean
In the Grace Infinite!
Then vest me with armour,
And name me Thy Knight,
And gird me with Justice,

THE FIERY CROSS

EX TENEBRIS (continued)

And arm me with Right!
And there in the battle
Of souls I will fight,
With the passionate zeal
Of a heart all contrite.
And I'll win Thee fair Kingdoms,
Many Kingdoms, great Kingdoms,—
Sweet Kingdoms of Light,
I will win from the Night,
To the Glory of God
And my Lord's high delight.

THE PADRE'S STORY

He came to me in my small tent,
Quite late one night,—
The night before the red-hot Vimy fight,
And his concern was evident.
“Padre,” he said,
Fey-eyed and anxiously,—
“To-morrow we go in.
And I’m a coward, I’m afraid.
Yes, I’m afraid to die.
I’ve lived so light and carelessly, you see,
And now—perhaps Death waits for me
Just over there.
This time to-morrow I may lie there dead.
Can you say anything to buck me up
And make a man of me?
Tell me about things. Tell me all;—
Of death and after. If you can,
Fit me to meet the call
And play the man!”
I told him as I would a child,—
Of God,—and Christ—the Father’s love,—

THE FIERY CROSS

THE PADRE'S STORY (continued)

The wondrous Father-Motherhood
That longs for all men's good,—
Of the great joys above—the bliss
Of that new life for those
Who strive their best in this;—
The simplest, highest things,—
To him, the greatest.
And he listened eagerly,
Fey-eyed and anxiously.

And then we knelt.
I said a little prayer,
Commending him to God;
And as we knelt, I felt
God with us there, and new life in the boy.

“Padre,” he said, when I had done,
“The fear has gone.
I see it all.
Now I can face the call,
And if it's death, my dying may atone
For some of those things I'd best not have
done.
God bless you, sir, you've made a man
Of me, and if I die I'll prove me one.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE PADRE'S STORY (continued)

From all you say this doesn't end it all,
And now,
Through God and you, I'm strong to meet
the Call."

In the dim dawn they went,—
And some came back. . . .
Him everywhere I sought,
But found him not,
Nor any who could tell
What him befell.
But this I know,—
Whate'er his fate,
He did his duty,—
Died, if he died,
In the knowledge of God's beauty . . .
And the rest can wait.

IS IT WELL WITH THE LAD?

"Is it well with the lad?"

.
It is well!

Yea, it—is—well!—

But for us who are left,

Heart-hungry, bruised of soul, bereft,—

Our branching hope at one stroke cleft

From off the parent tree,—

We hardly bear our discontent,

Or come to full acknowledgment

Of Love we deem omnipotent

Which yet can suffer patiently

Such things to be.

Yea, and although,

Deep in our hidden souls, we know

That with him all is well,—

That nothing we could e'er have done for
him

Can equal this which Death has won for
him,—

That nothing earth could e'er have given to
him

THE FIERY CROSS

IS IT WELL WITH THE LAD? (continued)

Can come anigh the joys of heaven to him,—
Yet still, the mortal in us
Craves him mortally;
And nought shall stay
That craving till, on some bright day,
We too shall slip the clinging clay
And find him there awaiting us
Upon the heavenly way.

THE FIERY CROSS

PER ARDUA AD ASTRA

Lift me, O God, above myself,—
Above my highest spheres,
Above the thralling things of sense
To clearer atmospheres.

Lift me above the little things,—
My poor sufficiencies,
My perverse will, my lack of zeal,
My inefficiencies;—

Above the earth-born need that gropes,
With foolish hankerings,
About earth's cumbered lower slopes
For earthly garnerings.

Above the vanities and cates
Of the Forbidden Land;—
Above the passions and the hates
That flame there hand in hand.

Lift me, O God, above myself,
Above these lesser things,

THE FIERY CROSS

PER ARDUA AD ASTRA (continued)

Above my little gods of clay,
And all their capturings.

And grant my soul a glad new birth,
And fledge it strong new wings,
That it may soar above the earth
To nobler prosperings.

Lift me, O God, above myself,
That, in Thy time and day,
I somewhat grace Thy fosterings
And climb Thy loftier Way.

A LITTLE PRAYER FOR THE MAN IN THE AIR

I never hear
The growling diapason of a plane
Up there,
The deep reverb'rant humming of a plane
Up there,
But up to God I wing a little prayer,
Begging His care
For him who braves the dangers of the air.

"God keep you, Bird-man, in your plane
Up there!
Your wings upbear, your heart sustain!
Give you good flight and oversight,
And bring you safe to earth again!"

I, too, have hostages with fortune up above,
And what may come to you may come to
mine.
So, once again,—“God speed you as you
rove!
Both you and mine to His care I consign.”

OVER THE PARAPET

Over the parapet and beyond,—
No Man's Land and Bloody Pond,—
Over the parapet at last,
Death and Life an equal cast,—
Over the parapet we climb,
Out of the stinking mud and slime,
Over—to life; over—to death,—
Over and on while we have breath.
We have waited and waited for this hour,
Sick of having to crawl and cower,
And now we'll show the Boches what
It means to tackle the Kiltie lot.
Over we go!—if we don't come back
It's because we've taken the longer track,
That ends for all good soldier-men
In a better place, beyond our ken.
Over we go!—we have had the Call,—
We'll meet again, boys, one and all,
We'll meet somewhere and we'll meet
somewhen,
We will every one of us meet again;
We will all keep tryst in what is beyond
No Man's Land and Bloody Pond.

COCK YOUR BONNETS!

(Messines was the first fight the London Scottish, just out from home, had been in,—their baptism of fire, and a very hot one. They lost heavily but won through with honour. My own boy was then training in the 2nd Battalion. He came out with a draft to fill up the gaps a little later.)

It was after that black night
When we'd won our first bit fight,
In the shadow of the pump-mill at Messines,
That a Brass-Head came and prattled
To us, feeling pretty rattled
With the things we'd done, and more with
what we'd seen;

And he said,—

“Boys,—keep your bodies clean!
Boys,—keep your billets clean!
Boys,—cock your bonnets!
And, for God's sake, smile!”

And it bucked us up tremendous,
For the Boche had tried to end us,

THE FIERY CROSS

COCK YOUR BONNETS! (continued)

Though we'd given him double dose for all
we got;

And we'd gone through our probation,

And we'd saved a situation,

And the Big Pot put his finger on the spot;—

With his,—

“Boys,—keep your bodies clean!

Boys,—keep your billets clean!

Boys,—cock your bonnets!

And, for God's sake, smile!”

So we pass it on to you chaps;—

When you're some fed up with new scraps,

Just remember what that good old Brass-
Head said.

You will find it worth your trying,

Both while living and when dying,

And you'll surely be the happier when you're
dead,—

If you,—

Always keep your bodies clean,

Always keep your billets clean,

Always cock your bonnets,

And, for God's sake, smile.

THE SACRAMENT OF FOOD

Each meal should be a sacramental feast,—
A Eucharist each breaking of the bread,
Wherein we meet again our Great High Priest,
And pledge new troth to our exalted Head.

For all we eat doth come of sacrifice,—
Life out of Death,—since all we eat must yield
Life for our living,—and yet, nothing dies,
But in its giving finds its life fulfilled.

The wheat, the plant, the beast, and man, all
give
Each of their best, God's purpose to maintain,
And all subserve the end for which all live,
And pass,—to live more worthily again.

[NOTE.—This appeared in *The Vision Splendid*, but to keep these sacraments together it is reprinted here.]

THE SACRAMENT OF FIRE

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently, and thankful be
For God's unfailing charity,
And on the ascending flame inspire
A little prayer, that shall upbear
The incense of your thankfulness
For this sweet grace
Of warmth and light!
For here again is sacrifice
For your delight.

Within the wood,
That lived a joyous life
Through sunny days and rainy days
And winter storms and strife;—
Within the peat,
That drank the sweet,
The moorland sweet
Of bracken, whin, and sweet bell-heather,
And knew the joy of gold gorse feather
Flaming like Love in wintriest weather,—
While snug below, in sun and snow,

THE FIERY CROSS

THE SACRAMENT OF FIRE (continued)

It heard the beat of the padding feet
Of foal and dam, and ewe and lamb,
And the stamp of old bell-wether;—
Within the coal,
Where forests lie entombed,—
Oak, elm, and chestnut, beech, and red
 pine bole;—
God shrined His sunshine, and enwombed
For you these stores of light and heat,
Your life-joys to complete.
These all have died that you might live;
Yours now the high prerogative
To loose their long captivities,
And through these new activities
A wider life to give.

Kneel always when you light a fire!
Kneel reverently,
And grateful be
For God's unfailing charity!

THE SACRAMENT OF WORK

Upon thy bended knees, thank God for work,—
Work—once man's penance, now his high re-
ward!

For work to do, and strength to do the work,
We thank Thee, Lord!

Since outcast Adam toiled to make a home,
The primal curse a blessing has become,
Man in his toil finds recompense for loss,
A workless world had known nor Christ nor Cross.

Some toil for love, and some for simple greed,
Some reap a harvest past their utmost need,
More, in their less find truer happiness,
And all, in work, relief from bitterness.

A toiler with His hands was God's own Son;
Like His, to Him be all thy work well done.
None so forlorn as he that hath no work,
None so abject as he that work doth shirk.

Upon thy bended knees, thank God for work!
In workless days all ills and evils lurk.
For work to do, and strength to do the work,
We thank Thee, Lord!

THE SACRAMENT OF SLEEP.

Thank God for sleep!
And, when you cannot sleep,
Still thank Him that you live
To lie awake.
And pray Him, of His grace,
When He sees fit, sweet sleep to give,
That you may rise, with new-born eyes,
To look once more into His shining face.

In sleep,—limbs all loose-laxed and slipt the
chains—
We draw sweet-close to Him from whom our
breath
Has life. In His sole hands we leave the reins,
In fullest faith trust Him for life or death.
This sleep in life close kinsman is to death;
And, as from sleep we wake to greet the day,
So, too, from death we shall with joy awake
To greet the glories of the Great Essay.

To His belovèd healing sleep He gives,
And, unto all, awakening from sleep.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE SACRAMENT OF SLEEP (continued)

Each day is resurrection,—a new birth
To nearer heaven and re-created earth,—
To all Life's possibilities—of good
Or ill,—with joys and woes endued,—
Till that last, shortest sleep of all,
And that first great awakening from Life's thrall.

Thank God for sleep!
And, when you cannot sleep,
Still thank Him for the grace
That lets you live
To feel the comfort of His soft embrace.

THE SACRAMENT OF LOVE

Love is the sacrament of sacraments;
For God is Love, and Love is God;
Who loves knows Him, and in Him all the heights
And depths of those high rapturous delights
Which for Love's soul are very soul of life,
And through the troubled ways,—through stress
and strife,
Bear the soul upward to that final goal
Where Life and Love make one full-rounded
whole.

Love tints the grayest life with rose;
Love kindles fires 'mid winter snows.

Love draws the fallen from his sin;
Love helps the sinner grace to win.

Love lifts the fringes of the night;
Love gifts the eyes of Faith with sight.

Love to all loveliness is kin;
Love moulds all Life,—without,—within.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE SACRAMENT OF LOVE (continued)

Love is the mightiest power on earth;
Love to Eternal Hope gives birth.

Love—the Beginning and the End—
All life and death doth comprehend.

Love lived in Death upon the Tree;
Love lives again, for you and me.

Love through eternity endures,
For God is Love,
And Love is God.

Thank God for Love,—His first,—then yours!

FOR YOU AND ME

Some man has died out there to-day
For you and me,—
Died in heart-wracking agony, maybe,
For you and me.
So—of your charity
A prayer!—
A deep, abounding, all-sufficing prayer
For all his past,—his present,—and a fu-
ture fair
For him who died out there to-day,
For you and me.

And if your prayer transmute itself
To some good work for those he left be-
hind,
Their sense of loss, with yours of gain en-
twined,
Shall make life fairer for you both,
For therein you shall find,
Both you and they, in very truth,
Riching of heart and mind.

HEROES' WIVES

TO THE DEAR LITTLE WAR-WIDOWS ALL THE
WORLD OVER

Be worthy of your noble dead,
So shall your hearts be comforted!
They yielded all,—their lives, and you,
At Duty's call to dare and do;
Brave thought of them shall lift *your* lives
To heights befitting heroes' wives,
Like them to answer Duty's call
And live the life heroical.

—Just wedded,—childless,—lonelier still
Than if you had not known the joys
Of God's sweet sacramental seal
Upon the union of your choice?—
—And on in front a long gray way
Without one single cheering ray?—
Dear Heart, your love is nearer now
Than when, that day, with solemn vow,
You did yourselves on each bestow,
And each with each did all endow,

THE FIERY CROSS

HEROES' WIVES (continued)

For life or death, for good or ill,
As God should see most suitable.
Now he is near you, night and day,
His love shall tinge with rose the gray,
And—gracing time with goodly deed—
You shall at last reap your full meed
Of nobler joy, and find that pain
Will blossom into heavenly gain.

He is not lost who goes before,
But, standing in the Open Door,
He waits you there with outstretched
 hands,
Love's dearest, best ambassador.

THE WORD THAT WAS NOT SAID

(To those parents, the world over, through whose criminal neglect of the due and rightful instruction of their children in those simple matters of sex which so vitally affect their future welfare, the moral and physical substance of the race is being wasted—this word of warning.)

For lack of that due word,—

You sent him forth to face the deadly strife
Which men call life,
Unarmed, unarmoured, unprepared for fight,
And yet expected him to keep his 'scutcheon
white!

Yours the reproach if he should miss the way,
For you of your full duty failed him mortally.

For lack of that due word,—

You sent her out unwarned of the sore strait
That may await
The trustful maid untaught the world's allure.
You trusted Fate her safety to assure,

THE FIERY CROSS

THE WORD THAT WAS NOT SAID (continued)

Nor took the trouble to unseal her eyes
To the dim downward trend of life's high mys-
teries.

For lack of that due word,—
They two have slipped and fallen into sin.
They had kept clean
Had you your duty done and shown the truth
Of Life's deep menace to untutored youth.
Now is the greater sin upon *your* head,
For you it was that left that saving word unsaid.

THE FIERY CROSS

A LITTLE TE DEUM FOR WOMAN-
HOOD

We thank Thee, Lord, for Thy sweet Heart of
Grace

Revealed in womanhood in these black days;
For her high courage under bitter stress;
For her new spheres of wondrous usefulness;
For her heroic fortitude in loss;
For her most patient bearing of her cross;
For her high seizure of the times' dire needs;
For her sweet sum of self-denying deeds;
For her self-adaptation to the claims
Of these new days;—for the relinquished aims
Which yet mature in unexpected guise
Through her success in nobler enterprise;
For all the Christliness of gentle hands
Which soothe the passage of the running sands;
For grace of heart and life and winning face,
To young lives broken in the fiery race;
For all her ministry to days and nights
Of ceaseless pain that gnaws and saps and blights;
For that high soul of pure white womanhood
Which lifts man towards the Father-Motherhood;

THE FIERY CROSS

A LITTLE TE DEUM FOR WOMANHOOD
(continued)

For saintly lives whose days and nights are prayer
For wayfarers awander in life's snare;
For that White Fire of Love that welcomes all,
And turns with quick response to every call;
For chivalry in woman as in man,
Whereof comes comradeship Saturnian;
For every widening of her gracious sphere;
For her true instinct and her insight clear;
For that God-given wisdom of the heart
That sees below and takes the sinner's part;
For all that woman has been,—is,—may be;
Heart-thanks and praise we render, Lord, to
Thee;

For every strand in that sweet golden cord;
For every note in that sweet complex chord;—

*We thank Thee, thank Thee, thank Thee,
Lord!*

THE SECRET PLACE

Each soul has its own secret place,
Where none may enter in,
Save it and God,—to them alone
What goeth on therein is known,—
To it and God alone.

And well for it if God be there,
And in supreme control;
For every deed comes of a seed,
And lonely seed may evil breed
In any lonely soul.

But none, except of his own will,
Need ever lonely be;
If he but quest, his Royal Guest
Will quick provide him with the best
Of all good Company.

MY GUEST

Within my holy place
My Chiefest One is dwelling,
Not as a passing guest
But of His own houseling.
O, miracle of grace,
My whole heart's love compelling—
Within this tiny space
The Lord of All Good Life,
The Very Light of Life and Love
Is dwelling!
And now my happy tears
Have washed away my fears,
And, past all mortal telling,
Within my heart the tide of Love
To fullest flood is welling.

Praise be to Thee!
To Thee unending praise,
For all the glowing depth and height
Of these God-given days!
For Thy sweet grace
Which in this place

THE FIERY CROSS

MY GUEST (continued)

Doth time and space alike efface,
And, merging faith in heavenly sight,
Dares, with its inner mystic light,
To look upon Thy face.

THE VISION

One took me up into a lofty place,
And opened windows that my soul should see
Visions of this, and that, touched by His grace—
Of that which was . . . and is . . . and yet may
be.

From the first lattice we looked out
Upon a boundless waste of night-black sea,
So vast and void that my soul chilled
At its black misery.
That stark black empty darkness filled
Me with despair,—no smallest sign
Of life was there,
No ray of light to enlumine
The darkness saturnine.

Then, as I gazed,—far off,—
A pulse of light,—
A little throb of life, as when the dawn
First quickens in the womb of night,—
A tiny glow, scarce visible;
But, as I watched, I saw it grow and grow;

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

And then,—within the glow,—
A Cross, upon a low dark hill,
Far-off and small, and yet my soul did thrill
At sight of them; for in that cross
Was Hope Invincible.

But, all about it and below,
Surged that vast sea of unrelievèd woe,—
A grim wild welter of calamity,
A tumbling grave, a ceaseless misery,
Which rolled insurgent far as eye could see
Thro' all the outer voids,—
A sink of bitterness and loss,
Whose sullen waves washed ever to and fro
Beneath the Cross.
But, up above, the Cross did grow and grow,
Till I could see its pulsing beams
Light with their radiant gleams
The nearer margin of the grim black flow.

Then, to my searching eyes, the flood disclosed
Strange things;—
Each drop in that black tide had been a man;
Now, derelict, they lay beneath the ban,
And went to form that sea demonian.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

Among those myriad hecatombs of dead,
Were thrones and crowns,—and bodies of dead
kings,

And those they ruled, misruled, betrayed;—
And perished empires, wasted and decayed,—
And peoples long since passed,—
Their pomps and prides,—the treasures they
amassed,

Their monuments, their temples,—all become
No more than spume upon that sea of doom,
Like outcast offal on a shore of mud,
Flung to the void and harried by the flood.

And when I turned in horror to my Guide,
His face was sad as sadly He replied,—

*“The wrecks of Time,—the wreckage of
mankind.*

*The Cross was there, but man was ever
blind.”*

And still the Cross, above the weltering flow,
Larger and brighter grew, and still did grow
Until its head

Touched Heaven, and its wide arms
Embraced the earth. And the soft glow
Of its pure radiant glory shed

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

A sense of blessing, far and wide,
Across the horrors of the grim black tide.

And ever brighter grew the Cross, until
It seemed to dominate and fill
All space with its soft silent majesty,
And all the other worlds bent grave bright eyes,
Charged with untold solemnities,
Upon its sweet supremacy.
And all creation watched, with bated breath,
The Cross that grew, and growing, ever grew
Still fairer, stronger, and more purely bright,
Above that Sink of Death,
And sent its light
Wide-searching through the chambers of the
night.

And now I saw, within each radiant beam,
A slender bridge that led from out the night,
From thence to there,
Across that seething gulf of black despair,
Unto the Light.
—Long, wavering bridges, very strait and slight,
Their swaying lengths upheld with anxious care
By stalwarts who, in saintly servitude,

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

With courage rare, and noble fortitude,
Braved all the terrors of the fell black flood,
And their great burdens did upbear
'Gainst all vicissitude.

And, as we gazed, my Guide said heartfully,—

*“Narrow the Way
That leads from Dark to Light,—
From Night to Day;
Nor lacking foes,—nor dule, nor loss,
But that way is the only way,—
The High Way of the Cross.”*

And many travellers there were, who pressed
Along those narrow ways,
In quest of God's sweet grace.
Backs to the night, and faces to the light,
They travelled bare;
There was no room upon those narrow ways
For aught save life's necessities.
Some sought at first to bring
Their worldly gear, but soon did fling
It on the tide, nor more regarded it.
Some fell. I saw them lifted, carried on;
And some I saw slip down
Into the tide and be o'erwhelmed. . . .

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

But ever, those great saintly servitors,
With courage rare and noble fortitude,
Upheld the narrow ways against the flood
And all vicissitude.

Another lattice opened, and I saw
The earth spread wide below me; and with awe
I watched its myriad workers toiling there
With feverish haste and all-absorbing care,
Each for himself, with scarce a thought for aught
But his own gain and holding what he got.
A grim ignoble scramble for the best
That earth could yield,—a frantic quest
Of wealth and pleasure, and the lower things,
With no prevision of the reckonings
That time exacts when God's ways are reversed,
And man, for his own gain, sets last things first.
Life ran full swift, and garishly, and hard,—
Each man and nation ever on the guard
Against aggression,
Each striving with his might to hold in ward
His own hard-won possession.

The whole world worked, as did the men of old,
Girt with their arms, their safety to uphold,—

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

Quick to resent infringement of their rights,
Yet suffering patiently gross parasites
Who battered on the first-fruits of their toil
And found their own occasion in turmoil.
And Faith and Hope and Love, with sorrowing
 eyes,
In exile grieved o'er man's disloyalties.
A cloud surcharged with evil overhung
The toilsome earth,
And over all its gloomy shadow flung.
And there, in the shadow, very far away,
The Cross stood—dimmed, and fallen on decay.
Some still indeed turned to it in their need,
But, for the most part, it had little heed.
For man, bowed down to earth beneath his load,
Turned but a stubborn back towards his God.

Then—in a flash—like sudden summer storm,—
Earth was at war, and every land aswarm
With legions hurrying to the fight. The clash
Of arms resounded everywhere. The crash
And thunder of it bellowed through the skies,
Stabbed with the wailing agonies and cries
Of the poor victims in the fiery net,
Writhing in all the torments of man's hate.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

And the foul reek of it did overshadow
All life and heaven itself with its fell cloud.

The Cross was dim and very far away,
Man had dispensed him of its gentle sway.
The Sea of Doom, with its despairing gloom,
Was not so terrible as this
Foul Stygian abyss,
Aflame with vicious fires and thund'rous hate,
Where Life its high estate did abdicate,
And on its altars all degenerate
Its Saviour once again did immolate.
For there was Death with yet a gleam of life,
And here was life with Life in deadly strife.

I turned in horror to my Guide:—
“After two thousand years”
No word He spoke.
He bowed His head, and sighed,—
A sigh more eloquent
Than all the words e'er spoken,
The sigh of One whose heart once broke
O'er man impenitent,
And now again was broken.
Great drops of blood were on His brow,

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

His fair white robe with blood was red,
His hands were bleeding and His feet;
At this defeat the old wounds bled,
And yet . . .

His love was undiminishèd.
Once more He drank the bitter cup,—
Once more the hyssop and the gall;
Yet, in His agony, His eyes
Were all majestical.

He turned—with mien inscrutable,—
Anguish and expectation strangely blent
With Hope, and all with Love omnipotent,
And yet His face was very sorrowful.
"Wouldst thou see that which is to be?" He said.
"Yea, Lord!" I answered eagerly.
And at the word He to a farther lattice led,
And turned and looked me through and through
Before He openèd,

Then flung it wide,
And, side by side,
We stood and gazed upon a wondrous scene,
A scene of Perfect Peace,—an earth swept clean
Of all that did the former earth demean,—
Of war, warmakers, every smallest thing

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

That by its subtle cozening
Kept Life at odds and ever on the jar,
And set a bar
'Twixt man and man, and so 'twixt man and God.
Gone were the old dishonesties, the lies,
Ill-faiths, and lack of faith, warped sympathies,
And drink, and vice,—the immoralities
That sapped Life at the fount, and left it all
Emasculate and weakened to its fall.
Now, freed at last from War, and War's alarms,
Man walked erect, uncrushed by weight of arms,
And lived, as God intended him, at peace,
To Life's enrichment and his soul's increase.
Earth smiled and blossomed as she ne'er had done
Since out of chaos her first state was won;
And, striving now in peace as once in war,
The peoples lived full lives as ne'er before.

Now, in a clear blue sky a clear sun shone;
Gone all the loathsome reek and smoke that hide
War's tragedies and infamies, and gone
Each smallest sign of that old life that died
When last the world its Saviour crucified.
From all the earth a hum of sweet content
Rose up to heaven in ceaseless sacrament.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

The air was sweet with singing birds and praise,—
No man was weary,—all too short the days

For all the joys life held,

And from the whole wide world there swelled
Pæans of joy for Life's redeemèd ways.

And there on high, in blazing splendour set,
The Cross triumphant stood, with nought to let
The wonder and the glory of its might,
Nor stay man of its respite infinite.

“Now God be praised!” I cried, with vital joy,
At sight of earth on such benign employ.

But He spoke not. . . . Nor did His face
Show any lightening of His soul's distress.

One yearning look, which burned, and burned,
and burned,

And then, reluctantly, He turned,

And, still reluctant, opened wide

Another lattice. . . .

. . . Like a blast from hell

Came up the stench execrable,

The reek and stench of war I knew so well.

Backward I drew in uttermost amaze,

Then bent, with curdled heart, to gaze, and gaze.

Earth was at war again,—

More hatefully at war than e'er before.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

Horror on horror piled; for now, no more
Right fought with Ill, Life's true life to restore,
But everywhere, throughout the whole wide world,
Kingdoms and empires from their seats were
hurled,
Nation with nation fought for greed of gain,
For place, for headship,—as of old fought Cain.
And worse,—to profit by the mad world-strife
Factions within devoured each nation's life,
Death and destruction swept the bare earth bare,
Life was a horror of untold despair.
God's Truce had broken in the hand of man,
And earth once more lay cursed beneath the ban.
The very heavens were hidden by the reek;
The Cross was hid, . . . and there was none to
seek.

This way—or that, I saw must be
The outcome of earth's latest tragedy.
“Lord—which?” I cried, in mortal agony.
And He,—

*“It rests with you, and with your kind.
The Cross is there;
Who seeks can find;
Yea, he who seeks shall of a surety find . . .*

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

*But man is blind,
Is blind . . . is blind . . . is blind."*

.
.

See now, my brothers,—
One and all
We met The Call
With hearts unbreakable,
And bore the brunt
Of woes unspeakable
But—on in front—
Just on in front—
Lie depths of horror and distress,
Foul pits of utter ugliness,
Of misery and wretchedness,
Beyond the power of man to express,—
Unless!
. Unless!—

One only way there is by which this load
Of coming ill may yet be turned to good,—
One—only—way,—

Come back to God!

THE FIERY CROSS

THE VISION (continued)

No laws, no cleverness, no statesmanship
Of man can save the world and with new life
equip;

One Power alone,—*Come back to God,*
And His allegiance own!

Cast out the evils that our souls debased!
Cleanse out Life's temple! Sweep it clean and
chaste!

Let His fair image be no more defaced!—
Come back to God!

God is not mocked . . .
Yet have we spurned and scorned and flouted Him,
Yea, we have sorely grieved and doubted Him;—
And that way lies sure death.
Come back to God!

Come back to God!—
The only road by which the coming ill
May yet be turned to good,—
Come back to God!
Come back to God!

GRACE ROBES

If my sweet thought could texture take,
And of its best your vesture make,
 How fair would be your robing!
Of summer cloud and heaven's own blue,
Inwove with every rainbow hue,
And sprinkled thick with diamond dew;—
That is the robe I'd weave for you,
 And fair would be your robing!

But you for your own self do weave
Robes nobler than I can conceive,—
 How wondrous fair your robing!
Of gracious deed and noble thought,
Of battles for the fallen fought,
Of hope to faltering footsteps brought,
New ways to wandering sinners taught;—
All these your wondrous robes have wrought,
 And fair indeed your robing!

THE HIGH CALL

[With a violin-bow, a tuning-fork, and a flame of hydrogen, a very beautiful experiment is performed. The passage of the bow over the tuning-fork evokes a note of high frequency, the vibrations of which, travelling through the air, cause the flame to leap responsively and burn more brilliantly,—a symbolic case of perfect sympathy.]

In the dim dawn—

When, through the still dark sky,
God's mighty voice rang out—"Let—there—
be—Light!"

Swift at the word, from out the womb of night,
Sprang forth the Sun's all glorious majesty,
Blazing with splendour bright.

So the thrilled flame
Answers the music's call,
And leaps and burns with sudden new-born fire;
So flames the soul, when Love, the Glorifier,
Lifts it on wings of joys celestial
To heavens of high desire.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE HIGH CALL (continued)

As that pure light
Leaps to the quickening sound,
The soul chivalrous leaps to heaven aflame,
When, at white heat, *his* virgin soul can claim
That with *her* love his life's high need hath
found
Its royal diadem.

NEIGHBOURS

For three long years we all have gone,
Close neighbouring with Death.
And such a mate were weight too great
If we had walked alone.
But, to us, in our low estate,
Came Great-Heart Hope, and True-Heart
Faith,
And Love upon her throne:
And never will these three disown
The simple souls that cling to them,
And claim them as their own.
For Love, the Queen, is queen of all,
And ever answers every call
Of every troubled soul.
Her touch is ecumenical;
She makes the broken whole.

THE DAYS

The Days steal softly through the Curtained
Door,

One at a time the Warder lets,—no more,
Each with his gifts close-veiled from human sight,
And lays them at my feet upon the floor;

Then waits, while I discover what he brought,
Great things and small, with good and evil
fraught,

And watches quietly while I make play,
For good or ill,—and all too oft for nought.

And while he waits I deck him as I will,
And whiles it is well done, and whiles but ill;
Nought any wears but what my will has wrought,
And what I do is all unchangeable.

Each bears a scroll and quick inscribes thereon
All that I do,—the more I leave undone;
Till, when Night beckons from his door, they pass,
And leave me for a little space alone.

THE FIERY CROSS

THE DAYS (continued)

But each, ere passing through Night's shadowy
door,
Strips off his robes and leaves them on the floor;
Each Day goes naked, bearing but his scroll,
And what he leaves is added to my store.

He passes through the Portal of the Night,
But that he leaves lies ever in our sight—
God's sight and mine,—and some is gray, some
black,
And some, by God's sweet grace, is almost white.

So speeds the great procession of the Days,
Too fast, too slow, but nought its progress stays;
Each gives me back that which I first have given,
But what each takes my endless future sways.

FATHER-MOTHERHOOD

O wondrous Father-Motherhood—
Great Dual Nature!
We bless Thee that therein we find,
With joyful soul and grateful mind,
Thy fullest stature!

THE KEY

The Cross of Calvary
Was verily The Key
By which our Brother Christ
Unlocked The Door
Of Immortality
To you and me;
And, passing through Himself before,
He set it wide
For evermore,
That we, by His grace justified,
And by His great love fortified,
Might enter in all fearlessly,
And dwell for ever by His side.

The Cross of Death
Became the Key of Life;
So now—this purge of fiery wrath,
This woful fratricidal strife,
May leave along The Reaper's path
A sweet and precious aftermath
Of Hope, born of a new-born Faith,
Of Life re-born of Death.

THE FIERY CROSS

HIS DWELLING-PLACE

He loves to dwell
In the spotless cell
Of the Little White House of Bread.
But dearer still
He loves to fill
The soul of a spotless maid.

THE FIERY CROSS

I—GOD—AM!

Evil triumphant everywhere,
Thy world debased;
Life's lowest passions, stark and bare,
Laying Life waste;
What can our hearts, Lord, but despair,—
*"Be still!—and know
That I—GOD—AM!"*

Good of the ages in the fire,
And none to save;
Thy world a world-wide funeral pyre,
A mighty grave;
Christ trampled down into the mire,—
*"Be still!—and know
That I—GOD—AM!"*

Might's ruthless grip upon the days,
Love beaten prone;
Greed stalking rampant through the ways,
Hope well-nigh gone;
Untruth that all Thy Truth betrays,—
*"Be still!—and know
That I—GOD—AM!"*

THE FIERY CROSS

I—GOD—AM! (continued)

Fret not your souls with vain despair,
I see it all.

In this foul crime had you no share?
I know it all.

Strive now your failure to repair!
Both you and they who wove the snare
Must come to know
That I—GOD—AM!

Know this,—I . . . AM!
As I have been,—I AM—I so shall be,—
Lord of all life through all eternity.
I all things made. I all things know and see,
And that I made I can at will unmake,
But—for man's sake
Still hopefully I wait.

Man, that he might attain his fullest state,
I dowered with free-will—
The will to choose his way for good or ill.
As I worked out Creation, so must he
Work out his own immortal destiny.
But—if he fail, and still to sin doth tend,
Then must I intervene and make an end,—
An end—and a beginning,—
A better world for this world set on sinning.

DIMPSEY ON THE MOOR

Up along, down along, all along the Moor,
The lambs to their mothers are calling,
The lorn lambs, the shorn dams, are crying and
calling,
The lambs and their mothers are crying and call-
ing,
The lambs to their mothers are calling . . . are
calling
Are calling are calling are
calling.

Up aloft, all aloft, all along the Moor,
The curlews are flying and crying,
The curlews are flying and plaintively crying,
While down in the West there the daylight is
dying,—
Is dying . . . is dying . . . in glories untold
Of rose-lucent amber and blue-green and gold,—
While the curlews their vespers are crying;
—Such glories untold may our rapt eyes behold
When the wonders of Heaven through the Gates
are unrolled,

THE FIERY CROSS

DIMPSEY ON THE MOOR (continued)

And, for ever earth's trammels and fetters defy-
ing,

We come to full living through dying.

And up along, down along, all along the Moor,
The dimpsey is falling . . . is falling . . .
Like God's Holy Spirit the dimpsey is falling,
From the cope of the dimpsey the night-dew is
falling,

The drought and the dearth of the day to allay;
Like a sweet benediction the night-dew is falling
On the heat and the thirst of the day.

Up along, down along, all along the Moor,
The dimpsey new grace is revealing;
Up the combes and the hillsides the gray ghosts
are stealing,
In the folds of their night-robcs the lowlands
concealing;
The curlews are wheeling and flying and crying,
Away in the West there the daylight is dying;—
God's peace all the Moor in glamour is empalling,
The lambs and their mothers have ceased from
their calling,

And night like a blessing is falling . . . is falling,

THE FIERY CROSS

DIMPSEY ON THE MOOR (continued)

Like a kiss from God's lips night is falling . . .
 is falling,
On the slumberous face of the Moor.

God's peace is enfolding the Moor in His pure
Benedictory grace and glamour,
And under His sure and most sweet coverture
His creatures lie safe, and His creatures lie
 sure,—
All His creatures lie safe and secure.

*Lord,
We pray that we may
All the ills of the day
Of Thy grace be forgiven,
Of Thy mercy be shriven,
And in Thy good time
Find Thy heaven!*

THE FIERY CROSS

WHY?

With what intent
Was this grim sorrow sent?—
What meaning lies in such dread sacrifice?
Of a surety it is meant
To teach us this,—
That man, however fallen, still may rise,
If he repent,
Through sacrifice
To sacrament.
But—till he thereunto attain,
All sacrifice is made in vain.
Forced sacrifice no virtue wins,
Nor healeth any of his sins.

NATALICIA

["Natalicia" and "Natalis" were the terms used in ancient times to signify and dignify the Death Days of the Martyrs, which their friends bravely and hopefully regarded as but their Birth Days into the Higher Life. And, year by year, as the days came round, those dearest to them kept as sacred festivals these anniversaries of their translation. So now, amongst ourselves, in these sad days, there are few who have not similar High Birthdays to commemorate. Let us do it with as brave and hopeful a faith as did the men of old!]

I

Your Birth-Day! Just twelve months ago it ended,—

Your bright young life and all our hopes in you;
But then began for you the Vision Splendid—
New life, new work, new powers,—all things
made new.

Ours all the loss, and yours the well-earned guerdon;

Not ours to mourn you in your high estate.

THE FIERY CROSS

NATALICIA (continued)

Mourn!—at our loved one's dropping of his
burden!

Mourn!—for a soul with Christ emancipate!

Rather, we thank God for His generous giving;
Each gracious thing in you we call to mind;
We will not think of you as dead, but living,
Living for ever in our love enshrined.

II

Twelve months ago this day, you passed
To that high place God willed for you,
To that new work He called you to,
And life for us was overcast.

But when we think upon your joy
We cannot wish you back again,
We recognise the higher gain
To you in such divine employ.

Our love upreaches through the vails
To grace you in your high estate.
As daily we commemorate
Our joy in you that never fails.

We feel you nearer now than when,
Still with us, you were far away,

THE FIERY CROSS

NATALICIA (continued)

Nor did we know from day to day
If we should see your face again.

So now, for your fine loyalty
Unceasing thanks and praise we give;
Who dies for Him shall ever live,
Who lives for Him shall never die.

LIFE—AND LIFE

A bubble on a rain-splashed stream,—
Come—gone;
A troubled sleep, a broken dream,—
Soon flown;
A passing cloud, a fleeting gleam,—
Wind-blown,
Is man's life here;—
In terms of God's eternity
A short diurnity.

But there—
Beyond the golden veil,
West of the shining sunset trail,
What joys are his,—
What solving of all mysteries,
What mighty glories of release,
What wonders of the soul's increase,
What ecstasies of untold bliss,
Through all eternity are his!

'Tis surely meeter far, and sweeter
To consider these

THE FIERY CROSS

LIFE—AND LIFE (continued)

Than in despairing mood to brood
On Life's gray mysteries.
For no amount of brooding will
One moment stay the mighty wheel
Which, God's great purpose to fulfil,
Turns on, and on, and on, until—
He makes an end.

Then, with clear eyes, we shall look back
Along the rough and tortuous track,
And from the shining sunset crest
Where we at last have found His rest,
Shall say,—

*"We wandered long and wilfully,
We could not see, we would not see;
But now we thank Him gratefully,
His way was best; His way was best."*

LIVE CHRIST!

Live Christ!—and though thy way may be
In this world's sight adversity,
He who doth heed thy every need
Shall give thy soul prosperity.

Live Christ!—and though thy path may be
The narrow street of poverty,
He had not where to lay His head
Yet lived in largest liberty.

Live Christ!—and though thy road may be
The strait way of humility,
He who first trod that way of God
Will clothe thee with His dignity.

Live Christ!—and though thy life may be
In much a valedictory,
The heavy cross brings seeming loss
But wins the crown of victory.

Live Christ!—and all thy life shall be
A High Way of Delivery,—

THE FIERY CROSS

LIVE CHRIST! (continued)

A Royal Road of goodly deeds,
Gold-paved with sweetest charity.

Live Christ!—and all thy life shall be
A sweet uplifting ministry,
A sowing of the fair white seeds
That fruit through all eternity

BREAK DOWN THE WALLS

Break down the old dividing walls
Of sect, and rivalry, and schism,
And heal the body of Thy Christ
With anoint of Thy chrism!

Let the strong wind of Thy sweet grace
Sweep through Thy cumbered house, and
 chase
The miasms from the Holy Place!

Let Thy white beam of light beat in,
And from each darkest corner win
The shadows that have sheltered sin!

Cleanse it of shibboleths and strife,
End all the discords that were rife,
Heal the old wounds and give new life!

Break down the hedges that have growr
So thickly all about Thy throne,
And clear the paths, that every soul
That seeks Thee—of himself alone
May find, and be made whole!—

THE FIERY CROSS

BREAK DOWN THE WALLS (continued)

One church, one all harmonious voice,
One passion for Thy High Employs,
One heart of gold without alloys,
One striving for the higher joys,
One Christ, one Cross, one only Lord,
One living of the Living Word.

“TO MEN OF GOOD-WILL—PEACE!”

The world was dark when the angels came,—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

The birth of the New Time to proclaim;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

“*To men of good-will—Peace!*” Earth’s night
Blazed suddenly with heavenly light;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

The shadows of the past were riven
By that sweet effluence from heaven;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

’Twas in the depth of deepest dark,
That came to fruit this mighty work;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

The shepherds left their all, and sped
By lonely ways to the lowly shed;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

They did not wait, nor did delay,
Till they found the place where the Saviour lay;—
Hail, Mary, and the new-born Babe!

.

THE FIERY CROSS

"TO MEN OF GOOD-WILL—PEACE!" (continued)

Two thousand years have passed since then,—

They crucified the Christ—the King.

And earth still bears the curse of Cain,

And crucifies the Christ—its King.

"To men of good-will—Peace!" Ah, yes!

But who would peace must grace possess;—

Nor crucify the Christ—their King.

The earth is dark and full of pain;

Shall the heavenly Vision come again,—

While we crucify the Christ—our King?

The world has slipped away from Him;

Our fealty is warped and dim;—

We crucify the Christ—the King.

Who would have peace must never cease

To labour for His high increase,—

And crucify no more their King.

Forsaking every smaller way,

Seek only His supremacy,

*And crown Him . . . Christ . . . the
King!*

WHERE CHRIST IS BORN AGAIN

Wherever one repenting soul
Prays, in its agonies of pain,
By God's sweet grace to be made whole,—
There, Christ is born again.

Wherever—bond of ancient thrall—
A strong soul bursts its shackling chain,
And upward strains to meet the Call,—
There, Christ is born again.

Wherever vision of the Light
Disturbs the sleeping souls of men,
Night trails away its shadowy flight,—
And Christ is born again.

Wherever soul in travail turns,
And climbs the barriers that constrain,
With steady cheer Hope's sweet lamp
burns,—
And Christ is born again.

Where one foul thing is purged away,
And Life delivered of one stain,
Love rims with gold the coming day,—
And Christ is born again.

FAIR RAIMENT

O that my prayers could raiment you in splendour,—

Heaven's mystic grace soft-spun to golden haze,
Gemmed with the radiant jewels of the tender
God-given memories of glad, good days!

O that my love could clothe you with the glory
Of its own vision of your loveliness,
Fined and refined with touch absòlutory,
Wove and inwove with eucharistic grace!

O that my joy could clothe you with the wonder
Of its own joyfulness in that you are!
What though our paths lie as the poles asunder,
I can thank God and worship from afar.

O that my hope could clothe you in its glowing
All-radiant faith in that which yet shall be,
When, with a gladness beyond mortal knowing,
Love claims its crown of immortality.

DEMOS IS IN THE SADDLE

Demos is in the saddle;
Look him fair and square in the face;
He has padded so long in the gutter,
Now he claims a more equal place.

And the sooner we accept it,
And admit his right to be there,
And treat him as brother and equal,
The better the world will fare.

The walls of division are falling;
Beware how you prop them up!—
For Demos is in the saddle,
And he carries the world on the crup.

THE FIERY CROSS

RETURN!

We pray—

*“Lord Christ, come down again,
And dwell with us, the sons of men!”*

Yet why?

Not for His coming need we pray,
Since He is with us, night and day;
Closer than breath, than life, than death,
Our Lord is here,—
Is waiting, waiting, sad and lonely,
Waiting ever, waiting only
Till, with vision clear,
We shall forsake our devious ways,
And come in from the wilderness
To claim His proffered grace.

See Him—sad and lonely, waiting—
For our coming only waiting—
While, with wilful heart, we still
Go wandering down the flowery ways,
And seek our good in every place
Save where is righteousness;
And still elect the lower part,

THE FIERY CROSS

RETURN! (continued)

Lest our own lower selves we thwart
And make our pleasures less.

Yes,—surely Christ is with us now
As truly as when, long ago,
He put aside His high estate,
And lived man's life below,
And, dying, left His proxy meet,—
His fuller Self, His Comfort Sweet,—
His Advocate, the Paraclete,
To make His Love complete.

Not—“*God to man*
Return!”—

But—“*Man to God*
Return!”—

Is man's one need to-day.
O, sons of men, and sons of God,
The Son of Man, the Son of God
Stands waiting for you in the Way;—
Heart, life, and soul,
He claims you whole,—
To-Day,—To-Day,—To-Day!

Return! Return!
To Him again,

THE FIERY CROSS

RETURN! (continued)

*Ye sons of men,
Return!
To Him Who grace alone can
give,—
To Him through Whom alone we
live,—
Return! Return!*

LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

Love
Casts out Fear
Like a pestilent garment,
For Fear is a torment
Which worketh sore ferment
In Life's noble cheer.

Bare before God
Stands the Love that abideth.
Love at its best
Stands the test, undistressed,
And nought hideth;
For Love in Love's honour confideth.

Yea, Love at the full
Gives its all,
Nor withholdeth
Its best in the giving;
And in its receiving
Takes all that is given
As good gift of heaven.
For God, The All-Giver,

THE FIERY CROSS

LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR (continued)

Loves Love's greatest giving,
Nor ever withholdeth
From happy receiver,
And happier giver,
The Crown of Love's all
In His joys mystical.

THE FIERY CROSS

ONLY A STRETCHER-BEARER

TO K. J. W. OF SYDNEY, N.S.W., AND ALL HIS
FELLOWS

[*"If I had a hundred Victoria Crosses to distribute, every one of them should go to the stretcher-bearers."*—GENERAL BIRDWOOD.]

Only a stretcher-bearer!
Only!——
But his life was high,
And higher still his death.
His loyalty and perfect faith
Did his Great Captain magnify,
And his high death
Was more heroical
Than the most stoical
Of fighting-men's;
For, like the Christ, he gave
His life men's lives to save.

He had a passion for life-saving,
An all-unquenchable craving
That no most murderous fire
Could check, no labours tire.

THE FIERY CROSS

ONLY A STRETCHER-BEARER (continued)

Out there between the lines
He toiled unceasingly,
Sorting the living from the dead,
Nor ever stayed
To count the risks that round him played;
Enough for him that broken men lay there,
Needing his care;
To succour them, he for himself
No thought did spare.

How many owed their lives to him
No man shall tell.
Over the top, in the half-light dim,
Into the fiery hell,
Unsent, he went,
Seeking them there,
And, to the depths of their despair,
Came like an answered prayer.

Then, when his own call came,
He passed, with heart aflame,
To claim the full and meet reward
Of one who, both in life and death,
Had served his Lord.

GIVER OF ALL GOOD

Thou art the Giver of All Good,
Thou—Thou alone.
'Tis man himself brings ill.
If he had willed to do Thy will,
He now had stood unconquerable
Instead of lying prone
Beneath the grinding heel
Of the Unknown.
Lord, turn us from our self-wrought ill
And set us bravely to fulfil
Thy Will alone!

THE FIERY CROSS

CAIN!

The mark of Cain is on your brow;—
 Of your own will you set it there.

The curse of Cain is in your heart;—
 Your own will did beget it there.

The brand of Cain is on your soul;—
 Nor can the world forget it there.

To gain your own vile ends,—you made this
 strife;

*But all in vain,—
 Peace comes again!*

To suit your own vile ends,—you murdered Truth;
 *But all in vain,—
 Truth lives again!*

To aid your own vile ends,—you murdered Life;
 *But all in vain,—
 Life lives again!*

To speed your own vile ends,—you murdered
 Youth;

*But all in vain,—
 Youth lives again!*

But Life shall ne'er clasp hands with you again,
Until your soul be purged of this foul stain.

MY TREASURE

Treasure I sought
Over land and sea,
And dearly I bought
Prosperity.
But nought that I gained,
On land or sea,
Brought ever a lasting good to me.
Pleasure I sought
Over sea and land,
And snatched at life
With eager hand.
But nought that I found,
On land or sea,
Brought ever a lasting joy to me.
For treasure of earth
Is fleeting gain,
And Pleasure is but
A mask for pain.
Life asketh more,
And ever stands,
With outstretched hands by an open-
ing door.

THE FIERY CROSS

MY TREASURE (continued)

And then at last,
My wanderings o'er,
All that I sought,
And God's good more,
Lay waiting for me
At my own door,—
Yea, more than I sought was at my
door.

He let me scour
The world, to show
His Love and Power
Must all bestow.
All mine own strivings
Had brought me nought;
He gave me more than all I had
sought.

SALVAGE

In these dread times,
Each day we pass unscathed
Is one day snatched from sorrow.
Help us to live full-faithed,
Nor stoop ourselves to borrow
From a possible to-morrow
That which may never be;
But, if it be,
Is still ordained of Thee, that we
May learn to rise
Through sacrifice
To nobler ministry.

THE FIERY CROSS

SO LITTLE AND SO MUCH

In that I have so greatly failed Thee, Lord,
Have grace!
And in Thy outer courts deny me not
A place!

So little of fair work for Thee have I
To show;
So much of what I might have done, I did
Not do.

Yet Thou hast seen in me at times the will
For good,
Although so oft I did not do all that
I would.

Thou knowest me through and through, and yet
Thou canst
Forgive.
Only in hope of Thy redeeming grace
I live.

SOME LITTLE WHILES

But a little while
 And I was not here;
But a little while
 And I no more am here;
So, for the little while
 That I am here,—
Help me, O Lord,
In true accord
With Thee to live,
That so I may
Upon that day
Fair reckoning give,
And joyfully
Receive from Thee
The crown of immortality.

LIFE AND DEATH

Death preys on Life,
And Life on Death doth live.
For without death
No creature that draws breath
Could live.
Strange paradox, and thought provo-
cative,
That Life must live by death,—
That without death
Life cannot live,—
That Christ Himself,
The Lord of Life,
His life did give
That we might live.

BENEDICTION

May the Grace of Christ enfold you,
Now and evermore!

May the Love of God uphold you,
Now and evermore!

May the Holy Spirit hold you
In communion, close and sweet,
With Himself, the Paraclete,
Now and evermore!

May the Three in One withhold you
From each smallest thing unmeet,
From all sorrow of defeat,
Crown you with Their joy complete,
Now and evermore!

May They gift you helpfulness
To your fellows in distress,
And the greatness to possess
Your high soul in joyfulness;
So, in all things, may They bless
You for evermore!

